

Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we will not be able to confirm receipt of reports but will contact you individually should any questions arise

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| Project Ref. No. | 15/038 |
| Project Title | Restoring island biodiversity: The reintroduction of endemic Mauritian reptile communities |
| Country(ies) | United Kingdom and Mauritius |
| UK Organisation | Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust |
| Collaborator(s) | Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and National Parks and Conservation Service |
| Report date | 31/10/06 |
| Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4) | HYR 1 |
| Project website | mauritian-wildlife.org |

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up).

The project started in June 2006.

In July 2006 a workshop was held for the stakeholders in island conservation and protection. Within this workshop a presentation of the project was given to key members of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF), National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS), Forestry Service - Mauritius, National Coast Guard and the Police Helicopter Squadron and President of a Fishermen Cooperative in the North, to discuss and agree upon the project protocols, the implementation timetable, predicted outcomes and the level of involvement and support from each organisation.

Separate talks and meetings have also been held with MWF, NPCS and the Nature Reserves Board so that all members of these organisations are aware of the project and have been free to raise any concerns or issues that may result from the re-establishment of reptiles on islands within their former range.

Two individuals from MWF and two officers from NPCS have been assigned to the Darwin Initiative project and have accompanied the project manager Dr N. Cole on several island expeditions to start learning the techniques involved with monitoring terrestrial vertebrate populations, reptile identification, handling and capture. Individuals from at least six nationalities including Mauritians currently working on other projects with MWF have had the opportunity to accompany the "Darwin Initiative Reptile Translocation Team" to learn more about the project and the monitoring techniques involved.

The Darwin Initiative Reptile Translocation Team has visited all of the islands where reptile species will be re-established. On each of these islands permanent transects have been cut and/or marked out and the resident terrestrial vertebrates have been monitored under the guidance of Dr N. Cole. Baseline population estimates have been obtained for most of the resident reptile species on these islands. However, owing to poor weather conditions throughout the region from July it has not been possible to obtain a sufficient number of observations to generate population estimates for some of the scarcer resident species on a few of the islands. To rectify this, the Darwin Initiative Reptile Translocation Team will revisit some of the islands prior to the translocations.

Planning is currently underway for the first reptile translocations in October 2006 and for a high

publicity release of Telfair's skinks onto Ile aux Aigrettes, involving Cabinet Members (including the Mauritian Prime Minister), Local and Overseas MWF Council Members, key government officials and all the stakeholders involved with the project.

Members of the Darwin Initiative Reptile Translocation Team have been participants in the Darwin Initiative Insect Conservation Workshop, 18th-20th Sept 2006, to learn and discuss the techniques that will be utilised in this project to assess the impact of the translocated reptiles on island invertebrates.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

None

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**